

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
Department of History
Semester I, 2006-2007
History 320: EARLY MODERN FRANCE, 1500-1715

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5124 Humanities (262-8694)
Office Hours: Tues. 3:30-5:30

This course will focus on the social, cultural, and political history of France from 1500 to 1715, from the French Renaissance through the absolutist monarchy of Louis XIV. One major theme of the course will be the intersection between politics and culture. For example, we will explore the French Renaissance and its impact on the monarchy and aristocratic worlds. Likewise, as we study dissension between Catholics and Protestants, we will ask how religious matters informed political conflict, popular activism, and warfare, and also ask how religion contributed to shaping the French monarchy, colonization, and national identity. A second theme focuses on the evolving social structure and popular culture of early modern France and its colonies. In addition to exploring high culture of the nobility and of major philosophers such as Montaigne, Descartes, and Pascal, we will examine the life of the peasantry and the urban poor, with particular focus on witchcraft, peasant revolts, gender dynamics within households and villages, popular religiosity, and Franco-Indian contact in the New World.

Reading and Requirements: The books, marked with an asterisk, are available at the University book store and on reserve at HC White. The xeroxed reader (required and very important) is available in the Humanities Copy Center at 1650 Humanities. All documents and articles in the reader are marked with (R). All students will take a midterm exam and a final exam. A paper (5 pages for 3-credit students and 9-11 pages for 4-credit students) will be due on Wednesday, Nov. 22 in my box #5031 on the fifth floor of Humanities. On certain Thursdays, we will have discussion section instead of lecture. I have marked DISCUSSION on those weeks. We will also do some discussion of reading in the lectures.

Week 1 (Sept. 5-7) INTRODUCTION: THE DIVERSITY OF FRANCE
Reading: Frederic Baumgartner, France in the Sixteenth Century, 1-32 (R)

Week 2 (Sept. 12-14) RENAISSANCE MONARCHY AND COURT CULTURE
DISCUSSION
Reading: Claude de Seyssel, The Monarchy of France, 38-39, 46-66 (R)
Baumgartner, "Nobility Contented," France in the Sixteenth Century, 47-55 (R)
Jonathan Dewald, Aristocratic Experience and the Origins of Modern Culture, 45-68 (R)

Week 3 (Sept. 19-21) NOBLES AND PEASANTS
Reading: Marguerite de Navarre, Heptameron, I: 88-95, 166-76; II: 160-62 (R)
François Rabelais, Gargantua and Pantagruel, 120-22, 125-27, 157-60, 192-96 (R)
* Natalie Zemon Davis, The Return of Martin Guerre, 1-61

Week 4 (Sept. 26-28) POPULAR CULTURE & GENDER
DISCUSSION
Reading: * Davis, The Return of Martin Guerre, 62-125
Documents on Images of Women and Men, Compiled by Natalie Davis (R)

Week 5 (Oct. 3-5) RELIGION: THE CATHOLIC/PROTESTANT DIVIDE
Reading: Philip Benedict and Virginia Reinburg, "Religion and the Sacred," in Renaissance and Reformation France, ed. Mack P. Holt, 119-146 (R)
Baumgartner, "The Church: The Protestant Challenge," in France in the Sixteenth Century, 135-150 (R)
Selection from Calvin, The Christian Institutes (R)

Week 6 (Oct. 10-12) WARS OF RELIGION
DISCUSSION
Reading: Baumgartner, "The Monarchy: Order out of Anarchy," in France in the Sixteenth Century, 211-37 (R)
Selection from "Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos" (R)

Documents from Knecht, ed., French Wars of Religion, 119-25 (R)

Week 7 (Oct. 17-19) REVIEW AND EXAM
No reading

** MIDTERM EXAM on Thurs. Oct. 19

Week 8 (Oct. 24-26) CULTURE & EARLY SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY POLITICS

Reading: Montaigne, The Essays: A Selection, trans. M. A. Screech, ix-xxi, 3 (To the Reader), 9-10, 79-92, 124-31; & Montaigne, Selections from the Essays, trans. Donald M. Frame, 101-105 (R)

Richard Dunn, Age of Religious Wars, 1559-1689 (N.Y., 1970), 128-37 (R)

Robert Schneider, "Swordplay and Statemaking: Aspects of the Campaign against the Duel in Early Modern France," in Statemaking and Social Movements, ed. Charles Bright and Susan Harding, (Ann Arbor, 1984), 265-296 (R)

Week 9 (Oct. 31-Nov. 2) 17TH-CENTURY REVOLTS: THE FRONDE & PEASANT UPRISINGS
DISCUSSION

Reading: Orest Ranum, Paris in the Age of Absolutism (NY, 1968), 197-228 (R)

William Beik, Urban protest in seventeenth-century France, 28-63 (R)

Week 10 (Nov. 7-9) PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICS AT MID-CENTURY
DISCUSSION

Reading: Selections from Descartes, Discourse on Method, in Classics of Western Thought, ed Hirschfeld & Knobel, 15-27 (R)

Selections from Pascal, Thoughts, in Classics of Western Thought, ed Hirschfeld & Knobel, 38-54 (R)

Week 11 (Nov. 14-16) WITCHCRAFT & SOCIETY AFTER THE WARS
DISCUSSION

Reading: Robert Muchembled, "The Repression of Witchcraft and the Acculturation of the Rural World," in Popular Culture and Elite Culture in France, 1400-1750, 235-78 (R)

Witchcraft in Europe, 1100-1700, ed. Alan Kors and Edward Peters, 260-275, 236-46

Week 12 (Nov. 21) FRENCH EXPLORATIONS OF THE NEW WORLD
THANKSGIVING BREAK

Reading: * Allan Greer, Mohawk Saint, 1-110

** PAPER DUE, Wed. Nov. 22

Week 13 (Nov. 28-30) FRENCH COLONIZATION: NEW FRANCE
DISCUSSION (of Mohawk Saint)

Reading: * Allan Greer, Mohawk Saint, 111-205

Week 14 (Dec. 5-7) LOUIS XIV AND THE ABSOLUTIST MONARCHY

Reading: Dunn, "France under Louis XIV," in Age of Religious Wars, 153-64 (R)

Voltaire, "Louis XIV: Builder of France," in The Impact of Absolutism in France, ed. William F. Church (NY, 1969), 120-140 (R)

Bossuet, from Politics drawn from the Very Words of Scripture

Duc de Saint Simon, "Memoirs" in Sources of the West, ed. Mark Kishlansky, (NY, 2001), I: 344-47

* Begn Molière, The Middle-Class Gentleman

Week 15 (Dec. 12-14) MOLIÈRE AND COURT POLITICS
DISCUSSION/ REVIEW

* Finish Molière, The Middle-Class Gentleman

** FINAL EXAM: Monday, Dec. 18 at 2:45